

School Council Meeting Minutes - December 1, 2020

1. Call to order at 6:33pm

Attending: Cathy Giesbrecht, Monique Aultman, Lori Beerwart, Suzanne Morton, Helen Jamieson, Lisa Pasichnyk, Michelle MacKay, Mary Addison, Joan Crockett, Elena Barmintseva, Meg Tosto, Jeanet Moore and Jenny Benke

2. Acknowledgement and Prayer

ESSMY acknowledges that it is gathering on the original lands of the Cree, those of Treaty 6 and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. Thank you Creator.

3. Review of Agenda

4. Approval of the Minutes, as presented (OR as amended) from November 3, 2020

Proposed by: Lisa Pasichnyk

Seconded by: Suzanne Morton

5. Chairperson Report - Suzanne Morton

1) Council School has its own email address now and it has been added to the ESSMY website. Anyone in the ESSMY community wishing to reach out to the school council executive should feel free to do so at: **ESSMY.council.school@gmail.com**

2) GSACRD Council of Councils (meeting of all school councils in the district) will hold its first meeting virtually on February 1. More information coming about the agenda in January. This is an opportunity for all district school councils to hear from GSACRD Administration and Trustees as well as exchange ideas with other school councils. There are typically 2-3 meetings per school year. If there is anything ESSMY families would like to have discussed, or would like to know about how other school councils in our district operate, please feel free to send your executive an email. I have not attended such a meeting previously so am not sure what types of topics will be discussed. Once I see the agenda, I will of course share it with our council.

3) ASCA Funding Cuts. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Education has reduced grant funding to ASCA by 75% for this school year. This is approximately \$500000. This will impact their administration and service delivery to school councils in Alberta. What that looks like exactly, is forthcoming. ASCA is a charitable society and has partnered with ATB in a donation drive to help minimize the impact of this financial deficit. The role of ASCA is to promote parent involvement in public education by advocating for, and presenting parent views through policy, into the provincial education system working by with government and organizations in Alberta.

To learn more about these funding cuts, and about how ASCA uses both membership fees and government grants to support their work on behalf of Alberta parents and school councils, or if you are interested in donating to ASCA, I encourage all in the ESSMY community to visit the ASCA website at “albertaschoolcouncils.ca”

The work of school councils is legislated in Alberta, and a means to garner the voice of parents in education. It is ASCA that largely represents our voice to the government. It is ALWAYS a concern when cuts affect an avenue of advocacy, in this case, potentially severely limiting public/parent engagement with our government. So, I encourage you to head to the ASCA website to learn more, and to then make your own conclusions about the level of concern these cuts mean to the voice of Alberta parents.

6. Trustee Report – Joan Crockett

I would like to thank students, parents, and staff for their ongoing patience and ability to adjust to the frequently changing COVID health measures

1) The Board passed a motion November 30, 2020 that reads “ The Board of Trustees relinquish the Faith in Our Future Initiative and directs Administration to communicate to our families, staff and broader community that the Division will continue to evaluate capital priorities as part of our ongoing Capital Plan process.”

What does this mean? – The Board relinquishes the Faith in Our Future Initiative, looks at new opportunities as we review and revise our Three-Year Capital Plan and assess our capital priorities. We will seek meaningful engagement and we will strive to keep you informed as we move forward.

Our goals are to maximize utilization of our existing school spaces and be in a position to be awarded schools in new areas as the opportunity arises. Division staff are working collaboratively with all our French Immersion school leadership teams to enhance and promote our excellent French Immersion programs.

2) Re-Opening Celebration and Blessing of St Gabriel Education Centre took place on November 20 virtually with 14 people present. The school relocated to the lower level of the Division Office in August, after renovations took place during the summer. Although there are technically 620 students registered, about 500 K – 9 students are enrolled for online learning. Teachers videocast lessons from various schools and homes.

Maggie Slessor, the grade 11 ribbon cutting student for St Gabriel finds herself having much more energy for learning this year. Maggie’s dependence on a wheelchair from her cerebral palsy diagnosis hindered her ability to walk up the stairs at the previous St Gabriel’s site. Her mother had to walk her up two flights of stairs, but Maggie would become exhausted without the use of her wheelchair and need to go home soon after. Maggie is grateful for the flexibility that St Gabriel’s on-site learning provides. She feels very supported that there are no more physical barriers to her learning.

Students, employees, and the public now have barrier free access to St Gabriel’s as well.

3) We are pleased to share our new theme song by our very own Superintendent Moroziuk who wrote, sang, and recorded the music. The song entitled "Arise!" will be used for our three-year faith theme. A video is in the making which will feature photos, videos, and art that demonstrates how students and staff are animating and living out our faith theme: "Get Up, Get Going, and Go With God" (Luke 7:14) The theme song can be found on the Division's website.

4) GSACRD's Education Foundation launched its first 50/50 Cash Raffle Fundraiser earlier. Dollars will allow the Foundation to support secondary learning with scholarships and purchase classroom equipment. The deadline to purchase tickets is December 3.

5) The Audited Financial Statements for 2019 – 2020 and the combined Three-Year Education Plan/Annual Education Results Report was approved and forwarded to the Provincial Government - November 30, 2020. The Auditors, MNP, totally independent from the Division, gave a clean audit report with no recommendations. They gave praise to the Finance Department for their collaboration and cooperation.

6) The Board approved the 2020 – 2021 Board Strategic Plan and the Board Advocacy Plan. Each year, the Board visits approximately 1/3 of the schools as part of the SRR process. With the current COVID-19 pandemic situation still at hand, visiting the schools in person is not recommended. Meeting with each of the school admin teams is possible by Google Meet, however the visits were intended to offer trustees an opportunity to see the school in action.

7) The Board of Trustees moved to cancel the scheduled 2020 Trustee School Results Review meetings and consider alternative means of connecting meaningfully with schools at a time when it is safe to do so.

8) The Division continues to work with an array of educational agencies and partners which include: parish priests, Catholic Social Services, Grace Committee, Sacred Heart Parish, Star of the North Retreat Centre, Alexander First Nations Education, Norquest College, Sturgeon Hospital, (this year students will be exploring virtual field trips to the Norquest virtual surgery simulation lab and Sturgeon Hospital seminars), RCMP Liaisons, U of A and Alberta Research Networks (100+ students in the Hope Program), GSACRD Education Foundation, Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium, as well as the U of A, Campus Saint-Jean, and Concordia Universities (student teaching programs which supports teacher recruitment).

I have captured the highlights for Division news for November but for more detailed information, please visit the GSACRD website: Navigation – Board meetings, agenda, date to find a summary and video of each meeting.

Next regular Board meeting will be held virtually December 14, 2020 at 3:30pm and will be livestreamed to the public. All Regular Board Meetings are open to the public. Advent blessings to all.

7. Administrator Report – Cathy Giesbrecht

1) ESSMY 2020-2021 Assurance Plan:

We have a different year in terms of reporting. First of all, we did not have Provincial Achievement Tests or Diploma exams last June. Our most recent academic data was from 2018-2019, and it included high school.

The Accountability Pillar Results: In the 2018-2019 school year, we reported uncharacteristically low results in our PAT exams. Since then we have unpacked that data significantly to try to pinpoint how to best address this.

- We have looked at individual student results from the grade 6 PAT exams.
- We have looked at all the questions in the PAT exams to see which types of questions were particularly problematic.
- We have addressed the question of French reading comprehension in the core subjects.

Areas to celebrate in our 2019-20 Accountability Pillar is that from 2018-2019 to 2019-2020 we had a significant increase in the amount of students who reported that they were proud of their school and would recommend their school to a friend. (Up from 67% to 82%) We would like to see that increase further, but it was certainly a step in the right direction.

Our Thought Exchange results gave us some data to chew on! The question, “How does your school provide feedback on student learning between report cards and tests, and what could your school do differently?” Indicated that many of our students and families did not feel that they were receiving enough feedback to inform their learning. This was of great concern to us as a staff, and it prompted our focus this year on FEEDBACK. We are looking to provide more consistent and regular feedback to students in order to further their learning. By relying on research from experts like John Hattie and learning new technologies like Pear Deck, we are exploring new efficient way to create feedback loops in our classrooms.

We are also working on what we like to call ‘Compassionate Classrooms’. Ideally, creating compassionate spaces allows us to address a number of items on our Division Satisfaction Survey - such as ‘I know how and why to respond to the needs of others.’ We will animate our goals - and in the end our students will be able to speak to our faith then ARISE! Get up!

2) ESSMY Option Fee Update:

We finished our review of Term 1 Option fees. We were able to tally what was charged and reimburse families for fees that were unused.

Currently, we are evaluating all of our fees to ensure that we are going to charge the right amount. Last year our fees reflected a course that was longer in duration each day and also ran half the year rather than one third of the year.

For the remainder of this year we will not be charging for options.

One of the reasons is that we realize that students did not choose their options.

Another reason is that we are a bit unsure of what we will be able to offer.

We will charge if there is a special project that students want to try - it can be a pay as you go. Also, we are going to tally closely what we are spending, in order to be able to charge as accurately as possible next year.

3) Feedback from Parent Teacher Interviews:

Staff liked it a lot. They liked being able to prepare and knowing in advance which families they would meet. They felt less pressure when lineups got long.

Teachers also felt that parents were sometimes tired by the time they came to interviews if they had been waiting a long time.

The majority of parents who have given feedback preferred this method. Many said how much they liked the format, the privacy and the time saved. Considering continuing this beyond COVID. Parents who prefer face to face can always book an appointment directly with the teacher(s).

Additional Comments from Meeting Attendees:

- I liked everything about p/t!!!
- I liked mine. However, I could only figure out how to meet with one teacher. LOL
- My daughter and I met all the teachers :) everything went really well!
- Would much prefer to meet in person. Online is glitchy and difficult to communicate. Being online is not conducive to having a meaningful conversation. I probably wouldn't bother with PT interviews if they continue to be online.

8. Unfinished/ Business Arising

1) Canadian Parents for French (CPF) Virtual Conference 2020 – many recorded sessions are accessible until January 31. Visit <http://eepurl.com/hflqv>

2) Canadian Parents for French (CPF) Releases “Be Brave, Speak French! – A Linguistic Security Research Brief” – Michelle MacKay

A great read for French Immersion students, parents and educators.

https://cpf.ca/en/files/CPF_2020_AdvocacyBrief.pdf

9. Next Meeting: January 5, 2021 at 6:30 pm